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## **Buddhist Forum / 2000 Nos.1 - 6 First Recording on 3.1.2000**

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Mrs. Sita Arunthavanathan, Prof. Chandima Wijebandara, Mr. Raja Kuruppu

Social Challenges of the Third Millennium / How are Buddhists expected to look at them.

I. The woman's status in society and religion in the Buddhist context.

- a. Historical realities in ancient India: Calamitous fall from prestige to religious scorn.
- b. Buddha's own challenges and the revisions and modifications he offered.
- c. Validity of the Buddhist position in the current global situation: equality as fact and fiction.

## II. The family, marriage, parents and children.

- a. Definition of love in the Buddhist context - a totality of social and religious vis-a-vis sexual.
- b. Marriage as a social institution.
- c. Sex outside marriage. d. Unmarried mothers, fatherless homes and single parent homes.

## III. Bearing and rearing of children.

- a. Parent-child relationship.
- b. Responsibility and accountability within the home.
- c. Teen age stress.
- d. Three-tiered relationship within the family - the need or otherwise of it today.
- e. The Buddhist stand: *satara sangraha vastu*.

## IV. Abortion as a world problem: the why and the wherefore of it.

- a. Normal arrival of children in the home: the parental role.
- b. ivf. or in vitro fertilisation and its social and legal implications: surrogate mothers, biological motherhood claims etc etc.
- c. restraint and discipline in sexual behaviour.

## V. Scientific and technological development and its impact on human life.

- a. Alienation of man from his natural setting.
- b. Pollution and destruction of environment.
- c. Consumerism. d. Bio-technology.

## VI. Supremacist fanaticism.

- a. Ethnic: Racial identity, Sinhala versus Tamil.
- b. Religious fundamentalists: Islamic factions. Christianity versus non-Christian creeds.
- c. Political: Democracy versus Communism.



## Buddhist Forum / 2000 Nos. 5 - 9 [February] First Recording on 28.1.2000

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari Tele. 689388

Members: Mrs. Sita Arunthavanathan, Mr. Raja Kuruppu, Mr. Asoka Devendra

What makes a good human a good Buddhist?

- I. **Humans in contrast to animals** / in their higher and lower grades.
  - a. Scientific theory of evolution vis-a-vis the theory of creation. Buddhist explanation [on an essentially religio-ethical plane] of different grades of life: *pañca gatayo* and *tiracchāna yoni*. *Vinipātagatā* and their return to human level.
  - b. Realities and limitations of ethnic differences. c. Superimposition of religious divisions which are selective and disruptive.
- II. **Basic ethics of human goodness.**
  - a. Human inter-personal relationships based on love, compassion and appreciation as against human-divine subordination.
  - b. *Maitrī* or equality [*egalite*] in friendship [*mittabhāva*] as against man-made divisions and gradations.
  - c. Universal friendliness of *mettā* should override ethnic and religious differences. In its wake should come compassion or *karuṇā* and

appreciative joy or *muditā*. These three virtues of *metta karuṇā muditā* are considered as modes of **Divine Conduct** or *Brahma Vihāra*.

### III. On being a Buddhist, i.e. Acceptance of Buddhism with *ti-saraṇa* as a way of release.

- a. Primary requirement is that one immediately chooses to elect the Buddha as his spiritual guide or *satthā*. This is equal to *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*.
- b. The Buddha is no more living with us. But while he was still alive, he declared that he who sees the Dhamma sees him and *vice versa*. So we take refuge in the Dhamma too. We solemnly pledge to live in accordance with it. *Dhammānudhammapatipattiyā Buddhaṃ pūjemi*.
- c. Finally we accept that the Sangha is definite proof of the efficacy of the way of life prescribed by the Buddha: *supatipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho*. This is the primary entry into the threshold of Buddhism. *Ratanattaya vandanā*

### IV. Core of Basic Buddhist goodness.

- a. Buddhism begins with a heavily socially oriented system of inter-personal ethics in its system of *pañca-sīla*.
- b. Buddhist ethics are clearly not theo-centric. Human existence is believed to be the best stepping-stone to get to higher reaches of transcendental development in the direction of Nirvana. Therefore the personal development of the human individual and of the society in which he lives is considered a primary requirement of Buddhist religious culture. In fact, that is why *patirūpadesa-vāso* is considered a great blessing in Buddhism: *etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamam*.
- c. Buddhism expects human society to be rid of the five-fold dread resulting from the breach of *pañca-sīla*: *pañcabhayāni vūpasantāni*. In their breach, humans are stigmatized as being villainous or *dussīlo* [*appahāya pañcaverāni dussīlo iti vuccati*]. Further, it is also said that they are

destined to suffer in a state of purgatory [*nirayaṃ so upapajjī.*]

#### V. From the basic Five Precepts to greater heights.

- a. The Five Precepts, as the guaranteed basis for sugati. Their worth as sotāpatti aṅga. Attanā va attānam vyākareyya khīṇa-nirayo amhi etc.
- b. From this down-to-earth **pañca-sīla**, Buddhism provides an upward journeying or spiritual ascent in the formulation of the eight precepts or **aṭṭhaṅga-sīla**. They are meant to be observed on the four special days of the lunar calendar. The full moon and the new moon, and the two quarters of the waxing and waning moons. Minimally, at least on the full and new moons.
- c. In the three precepts 6, 7 and 8 of the **aṭṭhaṅga-sīla**, we witness the beginnings of the self-discipline process or samatha aspect of bhāvanā.
- d. The **aṭṭhaṅga-sīla** as observed today?



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Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Mrs. Sita Arunthavanathan, Mr. Raja Kuruppu, Mr. Asoka Devendra

The Family as the nucleus of Moral Growth in Society.

#### I. Acceptance of the home and the family as the centre of growth of human goodness.

- a. Singālovāda Sutta of the Digha Nikāya, we accept with great pride as one of our best sources of information for the study of this subject. But remember, this alone does not pave the way to Nirvana.
- b. **There has apparently been an over simplifying of this Sutta in Sri Lanka,**

- possibly due to the Commentary calling it the *Gihī Vinaya*. But this is not to be the be all and end all of Buddhism to the practicing lay persons. This is only getting the ground ready. The Buddhist lay community, men and women, have many more things to do, here and now, for the build up of their religious life.
- c. The Singalovada is a complex study. The family is only one topic therein. That too, not in isolation, but together with its segmental adjuncts as i. familial [*putta-dārā*], ii. inter-familial [*mātā-pitā*] and iii. extra-familial [*ācariyā / mittāmaccā / dāsa-kammakarā*].
  - d. Respectful recognition of each complementary sub-group [*etādisā namasseyya*].
  - e. In view of Buddhist thinking, one has to seriously note the **tragedy** of the **reality** of unmarried mothers, and father-less homes in Sri Lanka.
- II. *Etādisā namasseyya alamatto kule gihī* = A successful householder should hold in honour all, i.e. six, segments of society. Summing up the injunctions for healthy family relationships, the Singāla Sutta says the above, referring to six different directions. They are east, west, north, south and above and below.
- a. The message is addressed with precision and unmistakable identity. It is directed to the young householder who is to run his home with maximum success: *puttadārabharaṇam katvā agāraṃ ajjhāvasana-samattho*. This sutta is called *Gihī-vinaya* or Ethics for the Householder. And it is added that he who follows its instructions shall always succeed. *Imasmim ca pana sutte yam gihīhi kattabbakammam nāma taṃ akathitam natthi. Gihivinayo nāmā'yaṃ suttanto. Tasmā imaṃ sutvā yathānusiṭṭhaṃ tathā paṭipajjamānassa vuddhi yeva pāṭikaṅkhā no parihānī ti.*
  - b. Since the person addressed to in the sutta is the young householder, let us begin with the inner core of **familial obligations** or mutual obligations between the householder and his wife and children. These are referred to as *putta-dārā disā pacchā*. This is the true core of the family where one

- has to make the start. The Maṅgala Sutta lists this self-same virtue as *putta-dārassa sṅgaho*. There are innumerable instances in the our Buddhist Suttas where these family relationships are seriously discussed. That lay persons who discuss these at seminars and refer to their absence in Buddhism or their inadequacy is a lamentable position of ignorance.
- c. Witness the respectful position a married woman is entitled to enjoy in the Buddhist household. She is privileged in five ways.
    - i. She is to be treated by her husband with honour and respect or *sammānanā* while being addressed.
    - ii. She is to suffer no insults in the household.
    - iii. She should be at the receiving end of conjugal fidelity from her husband.
    - iv. She should be fully in command over her husband's possessions.
    - v. She should get from her husband adequate gifts of ornaments etc.
  - d. She owes it too, as the wife in the home, to be equally worthy of her position.
    - i. She is well organized in her household duties.
    - ii. She manages the household staff with efficiency.
    - iii. She reciprocates by being equally faithful to her husband. Her chastity is above board. There are Sri Lankan sociologists of great repute who make bold to say that since there is no religious officiating by monks at marriage ceremonies of the Buddhists, Buddhism shows no concern for the virginity or chastity of the woman.
    - iv. She plays her role in the home dutifully by guarding well her husband's assets and earnings.
    - v. She is required to be skillful, diligent and enterprising.

**III. Charity begins at Home.** Thus goes the saying. So we do not need to make any excuses that we addressed our first instructions to the householder regarding his duties towards his wife.

**a. Children and their Parents.**

- i. While Buddhism wonderfully upholds children's duties towards their parents, it is equally true that parents, as in-laws, are dexterously



related to the inner core-family with cautious and careful instructions. The young wife appears to be the lady of the house who treats the in-laws with courtesy and respect.

- ii. This virtue is listed in Buddhism as *sassu-devā* and features prominently in the advice given by the Buddha to King Pasenadi Kosala with regard to the upbringing of girls in the home, whether of the king or of the peasant. Even while being educated at International Schools, I would venture to say.

**b. Reciprocal relationship of Parents to Children and Children to Parents.**

- i. This is more than adequately dealt with in Buddhism. Well before boys and girls become husbands and wives, or mums and dads, they should have learnt from both their parents, not merely single parents, about their identity. That it is the parents who begat them [*āpādakā*], nurtured them to that position in life [*posakā*] and guided them through a multitude of diverse vicissitudes, to be still safe and alive [*imassa lokassa dassetāro*]. Thus they know from the Mangala Sutta the virtue of caring for one's parents: *mātā-pitu-upaṭṭhānaṃ*. It is a *maṅgala* or success generating factor in the lives of humans, upholds Buddhism. Those who practice such virtues, heavenly beings call them 'persons of noble character' or *suppress*.
- ii. It is such truly tutored ones who should step forward to build homes, not mere way-side drop outs.
- iii. Stressing the value of parental care by children, the Parabhava Sutta puts it negatively, saying that who so ever neglects this duty while he has the means to do it, is heading for social disaster: *tam parābhavato mukhaṃ* should be called a social outcast.
- iv. To get to this enviable position of 'mutually loving parents and children', Buddhism has given more than adequate instruction under the *Satara Saṅgraha Vastu*. But very unfortunately today, by the time these valuable bits of information reach our listeners, many parts are nibbled off, as it were.

#### IV. Inter-familial relationships: those internally linked with the family.

##### a.

- i. In addition to the parents who are directly connected to the core-family but who bring in, as we see, a new inter-familial relationship, Buddhist texts also know of a secondary inter-familial relationship with senior members of the larger family who are referred to as *kule jetthā*, who probably live as separate families on their own right. Many Suttas refer to them as worthy of honour [*kule jetthāpacāyī*] from the younger family membership. This is a much cherished Buddhist virtue.
- ii. This is very much like the concept of the extended family elsewhere. The so-called grand parents and the uncles and aunts would fit in here beautifully.

##### b.

- i. What is most interesting about the Siṅgāla Sutta's classification and identification of the diverse social segments is its inclusion of quite a large number of useful persons who, in their own way, contribute to the well being and build up the social structure of the day.
- ii. *ācariyā* or the members of the academic community and the *samaṇa-brāhmaṇā* who constitute the spiritual community are scrupulously included. Social comradeship or *mittāmaccā* is equally recognized.
- iii. Finally come the domestic aids under the name *dāsa-kammakarā*. It is insisted on that they also get their share of respect and recognition [*etādisā namasseyya*].



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Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari Tele. 689388

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Success generators or maṅgalāni in the human community:

*Bahū devā manussā ca maṅgalāni acintayum.*

**I. A true Buddhist definition of *maṅgala* in terms of Buddhist thinking.**

- a. The Buddhist concept of success or *maṅgala* as envisaged in the Mangle Sutta [Suttanipāta / Cullavagga. pp. 46-7. vv.258-269] is unquestionably multidimensional. It certainly goes well beyond the mundane plane of worldly existence. It prescribes and paves the way for transcendental success as well.
- b. That being so, it is lamentable that Sri Lankan Buddhists today have ingeniously compartmentalized success into two main categories of worldly or material and spiritual or transcendental. This, they believe, stands mainly apart, one distinct and separate from the other. They maintain, **ignorantly and at the same time vociferously**, that Buddhism shows no concern for worldly or material success. Let us directly say that they are grossly mistaken and misinformed. We have a recurrent Buddhist theme which runs as *idha-loka-vijaya* and *para-loka-vijaya*. This means **'victory and success here'** and **'victory and success hereafter.'**
- c. What then constitutes material success? It is primarily money, social position, rewards of healthy family life etc. etc. All these are connected to or tied up with multiply structured social institutions. We need to keep an eye on this inter-relatedness and keep it in good running condition.

**II. The role of humans as success-generators. It is human endeavour and human skill that goes to make it, both in one's lifestyle and in one's activities.**

- a. At the very outset, it must be emphatically pointed out that it is the contents of the Mangala Sutta and strict adherence to its practice that brings about success to the Buddhist who upholds it as sound advice. It is the doing of every single item detailed out therein. They are thirty-eight in

number. They range from the correct choice of friends and companions as in *asevanā ca bālānaṃ*, through proper family relationships like care and respect of parents and one's wife and children like *mātā-pitu-upatthānam* and *putta-dārassa saṅgaho* to acquisition of learning and skills as in *bāhusaccañ ca sippañ ca* and total propriety of social behaviour - *vinayo ca susikkhito*.

- b. The sutta sums up its scope by stating at the end that he who accomplishes all these virtues indicated here shall never suffer defeat anywhere - *etādisāni katvāna sabbatthamaparājitā*, and shall be crowned with success everywhere - *sabbattha sotthiṃ gacchanti taṃ tesam maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ*.
- c. Take a few more ideas from the sutta which promotes the build up of a life philosophy like *atta-sammā-panidhi* which means a well established self with composure and poise.

### III. Religious connotations of the Mangala sutta. They are well beyond its chant value.

- a. We always maintain that Buddhist ethics are, more or less, mutually intertwined as social and religious. Undeniably one climbs up to the religious from the social. That, we believe, is what *sīla* helps one to do. This is clearly evident in the Mangala sutta and we wish it is clearly and adequately noted. That is why both gods and men, *devā* and *manussā* make a joint appeal to the Buddha to declare to them what these success generators are: *brūhi maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ*.
- b. Here are some among the specially religious items:
  1. *dhamma-cariyā*,
  2. *anavajjāni kammāni*,
  3. *ārati virati pāpā*,
  4. *majjapānā ca samyamo*,
  5. *appamādo ca dhammesu*,
  6. *kālena dhamma-savanaṃ*,

7. *samaṇānañ ca dassanaṃ,*
8. *kālena dhamma-sākacchā,*
9. *tapo,*
10. *bramacariyañ ca,*
11. *ariya-saccāna dassanam.*

Realization of Nirvana is offered as the highest success to be achieved in human life: *Nibbāna-sacchikiriyā ca etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ.*

- c. This being the original purpose for which the Maṅgala sutta was originally introduced and what we have now clearly indicated being the purpose to which it is put today, how do we then reconcile this contradiction? Are we willing to see this naked contradiction? Divorced from a life of religious or spiritual goodness, no sensible yardstick will ever gauge any measure of success in human life. Of course, we see all around us this kind of perverse evaluations being conceded. If we asked by whom, the answer, although often bitterly unpleasant, turns out to be by the state, by the public and at times even by religious institutions. Can a meat market or a wine shop be ceremonially opened with Buddhist monks chanting the Maṅgala sutta? A bottle of champagne may do it for the launching of a ship on its maiden voyage.

#### IV. Other aids and props recommended in Buddhism for down to earth success for humans.

- a. Success via economic well-being. As far as individuals are concerned, this is called *atthi-sukha* or affluence. That means that one has enough means to eat and drink without running into debt: *anaṇo bhuñjati bhojanaṃ.* For this, wealth or *bhoga* is needed. But Buddhism insists that all wealth must be earned and obtained by righteous means. In the acquisition of wealth, legally there should be no room for prosecution, i.e. *adaṇḍāraho.* It should also not be censurable by the wise: *ananuvajjo.* There should be no blame attached to the way one acquires one's wealth. It must be both *dhammika* and *dhamma-laddha.*

- b. Effort, endeavour and striving and not craft and cunning should underlie attempts at acquiring wealth. *Uṭṭhātā vindate dhanam* is our theme. Also *uṭṭhānādigataṃ dhanam*.
- c. Even funding large scale business enterprises, making use of loans, is envisaged: *iṇaṃ ādāya kammante payojeyya*. At the same time, ethics of lending and borrowing are specifically indicated.
- d. Zealous hard work, unmindful of inclement weather, is specially mentioned as contributing to continuous success: *Yo ' dha sītañ ca uṇhañ ca tiṇā bhiyyo na maññati karaṃ purisa-kiccāni so sukhā na vihāyati*.



## Buddhist Forum / 2000 Nos. 19 - 23 [May] First Recording on 23.03.2000

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Mrs. Sita Arunthavanathan, Mr. Raja Kuruppu, Mr. Asoka Devendra

Our concern about moral degradation in society and the consequent social disintegration.

- I. **Buddhism looks upon man and human society as a down-to earth reality, with humans at the helm of their own affairs.**
  - a. Buddhism as the message of the Buddha holds that humans, i.e. men, women and children exist in the world on their own. Each on his own right.
  - b. The quality of their life here and now, and **definitely not every single experience they go through in life**, is determined by the nature of their **willed action**, indulged in a life before or what is carried on now in this very life.
  - c. A meaningful review of the Buddhist theory of *kamma*.

## II. The need for humans to look after their own well being.

- a. Like a highway which strictly regulates its flow of traffic, in order to avoid accidents and consequent disaster, human society too needs to streamline its inter-personal relationships, develop a better spirit of courtesies and considerations and enhance a sense of responsibility and accountability. In developed countries they do regulate their traffic every morning and evening, showing great sensitivity to changes required on the highways.
- b. Buddhism having sensed this very well, does not wish to correct bad human behaviour by stupifying humans with external threats, coming from unknown and only-believed-in moral guardians. Human diseases are never heaven inflicted. What poor comfort and consolation to believe in such explanations.
- c. Like in the story of the Mangala Sutta, Buddhists take up this question of moral degradation in another sutta called the **Parābhava** [Sutta Nipāta pp.18-20. verses 91-115]. Heavenly beings are said to be interested in this problem of social degradation among the humans and they come and address this question to the Buddha.

"Tell us O Lord, what are the marked characteristics of social decline?"

*Parābhavantam purisam mayam pucchāma Gotamam*

*Bhagavantam puṭṭhum āgamma kiṃ parābhavato mukham.*

## III. Buddhist diagnosis of social decline as viewed in the Parābhava sutta: some aspects.

- a. The one who **turns his back upon the norms of his religious culture** is said to be heading for social disaster: *dhammadessī parābhavo*. Such persons are easily detected: *suvijāno parābhavo*. On the other hand, one who respects and upholds his religious and cultural values is destined to prosper: *dhammakāmo bhavam hoti*. He is easily discovered among others: *suvijāno bhavam hoti*.
- b. What the world lacks very much today is any form of **dharma** anywhere.

- Of course, Buddhist ***dharmā*** has its own distinctive character. But the world today expects every religion to provide for its followers a ***dharmā***, i.e. norms for wholesome behaviour, which would serve mankind well. Many religions today, we know, are on the look out to benefit from the good teachings of their trustworthy neighbours. It is only petty jealousies and provincial rivalries which prevent this process from reaching far enough.
- c. **Parabhava Sutta** almost begins its thesis with the insistence on a concept of **goodness**. Good or ***santa*** as against bad or evil implied by ***asat*** or ***asant***. The one who chooses or opts what is evil [*asantassa piyā honti*] is likely to degrade and decline. So is the one who dislikes goodness: *sante na kurute piyaṃ*. Such persons who go pursuing the teachings of **not so good people** is also listed in the category of those who degenerate: *asataṃ dhammaṃ roceti taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ*.
- d. How do we arrest the propagation and spread of such teachings in society? Such teachings communicate ideas which are socially and spiritually devastating. This is one of our biggest problems today. Both the state and society are mutually interacting on this and contributing to this disaster. Many things happen on the communication highway. We have to fall back on the solidarity of life in the home and the trustworthiness of our religious centers.

#### IV. **Parābhava's sensitivity to social problems and the sharpness with which they are analysed.**

- a. One of Buddhism's primary concerns is the respect shown by children to their parents at all stages in their lives. We refer to this virtue of *mātā-pitū-upaṭṭhāna* as a ***maṅgala*** or success generator. It is said to make good ladies and gentlemen or *sappurisa* out of us.
- b. An even prior concern is the care and love with which parents are required to rear their children. This must take precedence over the other. Let us remind you of the need for a meaningful and sensible study of the



- teachings the *satara saṅgraha vastu* as the **basis of child care and child rearing**. We stress this today every time we address the lay community, Buddhists and non-Buddhists. This is something which we humans need to learn before everything else.
- c. The **Parābhava sutta** takes up this issue of parental care, with a few meaningful provisos added to it. It first takes note of the economic situation of the children on whom it falls to support their parents. Adequacy of financial means to do that is first assessed. It says 'having the necessary wherewithal to do so': *pahusanto*. It also takes into consideration the dire physical condition of the parents, that they are aged and decrepit: *jiṇṇakaṃ gatayobbanam*. These considerations make it extra-binding on the children, at least in an extra-legal way.
  - d. Another important item here is the society's respectful attitude to the religious men in society. They are not to be cheated or deceived. They are not to be violated with dishonesty: *musāvādena vañceti*.
  - e. Among other items listed as causes of social decay are lapses of sexual impropriety: sexual gratification outside marriage and adulterous behaviour. Ill-matched marriages and marriage incompatibilities. Addiction to women, alcohol and gambling are also mentioned as very definite causes of moral decay and social disintegration.: *itthi-dhutto surā-dhutto akkha-dhutto ca yo naro laddham laddham vināseti tam parābhavato mukham*.

## V. Social stigmatization and a little bit of relevant Buddhist thinking on the subject.

- a. The Vasala sutta [Suttanipāta pp. 21-25. vv. 116-142] is the basis of our study. Here a Brahmin by the name of Aggikabhāradvāja rudely addresses the Buddha as a shaveling monk [*muṇḍaka*] and an outcaste [*vasalaka*]. The Buddha sternly asks him whether he knows what makes a person an outcaste, what low qualities of character constitutes an outcaste. He humbly admits his ignorance and expresses his willingness

- to be instructed on the subject.
- b.** This brings the Buddha before us as a social scientist of the highest order. He nails as lies to the counter some of the current perverted views of the day which people held as valid bases of social evaluation. He puts to the fore social wholesomeness and sets a premium on such elevating virtues of social goodness. Here are some unwholesome qualities of humans which he severely chastises. Proneness to anger: *kodhano* | fraud and deceit: *makkhī māyāvī* | perverse views: *vipanna-ditthi*.
  - c.** Breach of the injunctions of the *pañcasīla* is equally condemned as socially undesirable. Destruction of life heads the list. Whether born of egg or *dija* or brought forth alive [*ekaja*], such life one shall not harm. If any man has no love for living things, such a one is an outcast: *yassa pāṇe dayā natthi taṃ jaññā vasalo iti*.
  - d.** Theft, dishonesty and adulterous behaviour are equally condemned. It is equally interesting to note here the respect for all grades of honest and good religious men in society which was clearly evident in the Parābhava sutta showing itself up again. They are not to be cheated, it says. They are to be provided with food etc.



## **Buddhist Forum / 2001 Nos. 1 - 4 [November] First Recording on 08.11.2001**

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Dr. Mrs. Tilokasundari Kariyawasam

As I take over this new session of the Buddhist Forum, I wish to say a couple of things by way of introduction. Many of you, I know, have heard me several times over on this program. It is over a period of several decades. In the meantime, many things, I say many serious things, have happened in the area of

human thought and activity. Space wise, it is a global phenomenon.

To-day, we got to reckon with the fact that in the field of science and technology, the world, both in the west and the east, has advanced by leaps and bounds. To name just a few, bring back to mind the miraculously successful Siamese twins operation which was done in Singapore a few months ago. Do you also remember the bringing back to earth of the Russian satellite research station Mir, precisely accurate to the dot as indicated by those who set it up fifteen years earlier.

This is a clear indication of what people on this planet can do as long as they are not made insane by demoniac obsessions set in motion by forces outside ourselves. They may come from religious fanaticism, ethnic arrogance and political conceits. World leaders, I say, at both levels of state and religion must take serious and sincere note of these. But the world at large is enslaved and bound by stupid chains of loyalty to these Satanic forces referred to earlier.

Therefore our new series under the Buddhist Forum will not take the form of the oft-advertised Tuition Classes. We do not have to complete syllabuses with plentiful notes. Far from it. We will endeavour to clarify to our listeners, both Buddhists and non-Buddhists, the circumstances under which Buddhist teachings of Gotama the Buddha came to be delivered to mankind, by a human who came to know great deal more about gods and men by his own self-searching examination and analysis. These teachings will always be examined in their historical perspective, not failing to note their chronological stratification. We will study them, examine them and assess their true worth in terms of life in the world to-day

### Basics of Buddhism - a Historical and Analytical Approach.

1. Pre-enlightenment vision of Buddha Gotama as Bodhisatta, i.e. the Buddha aspirant, well before he became the Buddha, with regard to the human predicament. This is the situation in which we humans find ourselves,

evidently plunged into the midst of our day to day lives. Do not forget that reliably early Buddhist texts are abundantly clear on this. Here we are. Follow us diligently through the Buddha Vagga in the Samyutta Nikāya [SN. II. p. 5 f.].

Prior to my enlightenment, while I was yet unenlightened and only a Bodhisatta, a thought like this occurred to me. " This world of humans is plunged in misery in the fact of being born, coupled with growing into maturity associated decay, dying, passing away from this life into another and being born again. All the same, this world knows no way out of this predicament, namely an escape from decay and death. When indeed will a way out of this misery of decay and death be known?

*Pubbe va me bhikkhave sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattass ' eva sato etadahosi. Kicchaṃ vatāyaṃ loko āpanno jāyati ca jīyati ca mīyati ca cavati ca uppajjati ca. Atha ca pan ' imassa dukkhassa nissaraṇaṃ nappajānāti jarāmaraṇassa ' ti. Kudāssu nāma imassa dukkhassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyissati jarāmaraṇassā ' ti [loc cit. p.10]*

2. As a historical reality, this is what **our Bodhisatta**, i.e. **son of Suddhodana**, who had renounced his household life in search of a way of salvation for suffering mankind, reflected on. Remember this is **our Buddha-aspirant in this very life**, prior to his attainment of Buddhahood. It is this very down-to-earth reflection on the human predicament which prompted him on his quest for a release out of it. If you get a real historical and etymological meaning of the word Nibbana, i.e. the goal of this search, you would appreciate this fully well.

This first event in the birth of Buddhism, i.e. **this observation about the problems of human life** through its infinitely long *samsāric* journey, which is a pre-enlightenment event, has become **so important in early Buddhist history** that it has been, even with the introduction of the earliest theory of the Buddhas of the past, six of them in number from Vipassi to Kassapa, it has

been integrated into the incidents of the lives of all of them. Everyone of them is said to have made this same observation and acted and reacted in the same way.

I take this reaching backwards in Buddhist mythology as a search for a prop from the past to support an event of the present. Be that what it may. We leave it to our listeners. What we need here more is **to appreciate fully the profundity and genuineness of these first thoughts of the Bodhisatta**, at this clearly emphasised **pre-enlightenment stage**.

3. Today let us take a look again at the pre-enlightenment observations of our Bodhisatta as presented in the **Ariyapariyesana Sutta of the Mjjhima Nikāya** [MN.I.160 ff.]. The stress again is on the real nature of human life that it is subject to the normal behavioural pattern of birth, decay, disease and death. The Bodhisatta also stresses the fact that this brings in its wake masses of stress and strain and consequent defilement in our reaction to them. This is referred to as our being *attanā samkilesadhammo*.

The Bodhisatta further observes that realistically understanding the **Samsāric** position in which we are, as already noted, it would be unworthy of us to continue to be wallowing in it. It is in fact stigmatised as an **unworthy quest** [*anariyā pariyesanā*]. Without attributing to a power outside ourselves the regular agenda of pleasures and pains in our lives which invariably are products either of our own maladjustment to situations here and now, or are our own **Samsāric** inheritance, we must as Buddhists take up this challenge of life to tone them down in this very life for our own comfort and happiness.



**Buddhist Forum / 2001 Nos. 3 - 4 [December]**

## Recording on 03.12.2001

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Dr. Mrs. T. Kariyawasam

Basic Fundamentals of Buddhism's message - the true nature of the human world [*kicchaṃ vatā 'yaṃ loko āpanno*] and a solution to its ills.

1. We have already discussed how our Buddha aspirant, i.e. the Bodhisatta, already at a pre-enlightenment level, *pubbe 'va me abhisambodhā*, as he himself calls it, had a satisfactorily true vision of the world of humans. That it is all full of associated ills of decay, disease and death, together with man-created psychic evils of greed, hatred and envy etc. etc.

It is this vision of the world that drove the Bodhisatta in quest of a way out of it, a complete moving away from or *nissaraṇa* out of it. Let everyone of us grasp this **historical situation** in the genesis of Buddhism, together with its total impact, and endeavour to derive some inspiration out of it. Let us sensitize ourselves to this. We must become aware of the realities of the world we live in, e.g. of disease and death, and of near-death calamities like loss of gain and glory, prestige and property.

This is a great experience that the Buddha insists on our gaining. He says *dukkhaṃ pariññeyyaṃ* - discover and discern *dukkha*. In Buddhism, this is the one and only way in which **every Buddhist must go through the mill**. Until this process was gone through, the Buddha emphatically declared that he never claimed himself to be the Buddha. This is called **comprehending in their totality the Four Noble Truths in the Twelfefold Way** - *imesu catūsu saccesu tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ ñāṇadassaṇaṃ suvusuddhaṃ ahoṣi*. Go back to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and you will unmistakably discover it there.

Did you ever realize that this truly is the way to comprehend the message of the Four Noble Truths? Now before we proceed to discuss the primary importance of the concept of **dukkha** in Buddhism, let us also make quite clear to our listeners one other statement from the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta which is totally misunderstood in this country in the Sinhala translations of this sutta.

This is the word of praise with which the **devas** of the whole universe applauded the Buddha on his preaching of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. At every level of the heavenly worlds, starting from the terrestrial or **bhummā devā**, they all proclaimed that the teachings of the Buddha are unassailable and irreversible - **appativattiyam** by anyone, any where, human or divine. Sri Lankans have totally misunderstood this, and say that nobody else can do what the Buddha did [**no pñ vñ tviya hñ ki** in Sinhala]. Do we not realize that we are here robbing the greatness of a tribute paid to the Buddha by the entire universe?

A few more observations about the concept of **dukkha**. Leaving aside all classificatory subdivisions, **dukkha** is the general observation about the **unsatisfactory nature** of human life. Human life is also a part of the **conditioned existence** of the physical world. This is what goes under the name of **sañkhāra** or **sañkhata dhamma**. That makes the totality of the phenomenal world. We are expected to view them all in terms of **anicca** -

**Sabba-sañkhāresu aniccānupassī**. This is what brings home the truth of **dukkha**.

2. Let us now turn our attention to the second of the Four Noble Truths, namely the **Samudaya Sacca** which deals with the genesis or origin of **dukkha**. Having spoken first of **dukkha** and its cessation or **nirodha** as the main theme of his message to the world, the Buddha had invariably to turn to the origin of **dukkha** through his own philosophical method of causal analysis - **kismim sati**

*idaṃ hoti kissa uppādā idaṃ uppajjati.*

The reality of ***dukkha*** becomes a great deal clearer and much more intensified when we probe into this with honesty and sincerity. It is **our yearning** and **our desire for things** in the word, **both material and non-material**, in answer to the stimuli we get from the world through our sense organs. This thirsting and craving is termed ***taṇhā***. We feel very much inclined to indiscriminately gratify our sensory urges. Modern psychologists in the west are becoming very heedful of the danger of this what appears to be a quite natural process in human existence. They now introduce what appears to be like a curative therapy via what they call **delay gratification**.

To the Buddhist, there is nothing new in this. It is the basic Buddhist idea of ***indriya saṃvara*** or restraint in sense gratification. In the process of gratifying the senses, we constantly keep inflating the ego. We contribute to its exaggerated growth.



## **Buddhist Forum / 2001 Nos. 5 - 6 [December]**

### **Recording on 13.12.2001**

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Dr. Mrs. T. Kariyawasam

The Four Noble Truths - the Nirodha and Magga.

Today we start our discussion with the concept of ***nirodha***. We have repeatedly stated and equally well stressed that the core of the Buddha's message to the world consists of ***dukkha*** and its cessation which we are accustomed to refer to as ***nirodha***.



**Dukkha** of the humans is not a thing which exists besides or outside we men and women. We, and our children too, inherit it very naturally by virtue of the fact that we are **samsāric** beings. Therefore its cessation or **nirodha** naturally lies outside **samsāra**. **Dukkha** and **nirodha** stand polarized to each other. **Nirodha** is unmistakably the cessation of the process of **samsāric** continuance. It is nothing other than **Nibbāna**. It is in fact the journey's end, for each one of us severally, the end of the journey in **samsāra**.

\*\*Therefore we find that the best word or expression which clarifies this concept of **Nibbāna**, in our opinion, is **nibbuti** as in **laddhā mudhā nibbutim bhujjānā**. **Nibbuti** means **no more turning of the wheel**, it is the wheel of life which keeps rolling along. That is why it is also said of **Nibbāna** that the wheel of life **turns no more there** - **yattha vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati**.

This termination of the painful continuance of the **samsāric** process immediately implies happiness, comfort and much sought after peace. Now let us examine descriptions of **Nibbāna** which read like like **Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ**. **Nibbāna** is also the highest state of tranquility - **santaṃ padaṃ** as in **yaṃ taṃ santaṃ padaṃ abhisamecca**.

Another definition refers to the attainment of **Nibbāna**, comparing it to the blowing away of the flame of a lamp. Therī Paṭācārā of the Therīgāthā speaks of the liberation of her mind, her **cetaso vimutti** as being similar to the going out of the flame of a lamp - **Paṭipass 'eva nibbānaṃ vimokkho ahu cetaso**. Elsewhere it is said that the wise reach **Nibbāna** like the going out of a lamp - **Nibbanti dhīrā yathā 'yaṃ padīpo**.

\*\*With this definition containing the simile in their hands, many modern students of Buddhism both in the east and the west, even learned Professors, pose the question to us as to where, like the flame of the lamp, one goes after **Nibbāna**. \*\* What should be your answer? A process at work, like the combination of oil, the wick and oxygen around, produces the flame. When and

where this process ends, can we speak of a surviving product?

From yet another angle, we get a definition of **Nibbāna**, highlighting its psycho-philosophical character. These scholars break the word **Nibbāna** as consisting of the negative prefix **ni** which means **not** and the word **vāna** meaning craving. This is very correct, because **Nibbāna** is where all craving is ended. It is indeed the result of ending all craving. But we feel etymologically, this is far removed from its original conceptual meaning. It is very similar to the definition of **bhikkhu** as one who sees fear in *samsāra -samsāre bhayaṃ ikkhatī ti bhikkhu*. The meaning fits in well. But not its etymology.



## Buddhist Forum / 2001 Nos. 1 - 8 [December]

### Recording on 19.i2.2001

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Dr. Mrs. T. Kariyawasam

Tilakkhaṇa, Pañcakkhandha and Paṭiccasamuppāda.

1. We believe we have so far endeavoured to offer our listeners a fairly comprehensive analysis of the teachings of the Four Noble Truths. We even clarified the **pre-enlightenment genesis of these ideas** about the **nature of life in the world**. A closer analysis reveals that we ourselves, after all, cannot afford to be complete strangers to these. It is a **complete knowledge** as well a **complete experience** of these which gives the total maturity of wisdom with which we can reach Nibbāna. That is what was referred to in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta as *tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ suvisuddhaṃ ahoṣi*.
2. A vital ingredient of Buddhist philosophy which has to be studied with regard

to both its theoretical as well as its practical side is what goes under the name of *tilakkhaṇa* or **three signata**. It just means the three basic characteristics of all phenomenal existence in the world. These three are *anicca dukkha* and *anatta*. That everything in the world is subject to the law of change. That nothing has a permanent unchanging character. This concept of *anicca* leads to the very logical conclusion of *dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness which in turn convincingly proves the position of *anatta*.

3. We refer to this concept of *tilakkhaṇa* as a vital ingredient because the Buddhists have to use this as the sharpest weapon to cut off the arising of *taṇhā* after the cognitive process of *vedanā*. It is this lack of *tilakkhaṇa* vision that produces *upādāna* via *taṇhā* and thereafter lead to *samsāric* regeneration through *bhava - taṇhā paccayā upādānaṃ upādānapaccayā bhavo*. It is the arrest of *taṇhā* at this stage, with the keen edge of *tilakkhaṇa*, i. e. *taṇhā nirodhā* that will totally destroy the *samsāric* process - *bhava- nirodho*.
4. Let us now turn to the Buddhist concept of *pañcakkhandha* which we believe is the explanation for the phenomenon of human existence. It seems to explain the visible life process of humans from birth to death, i.e. one phase of existence in the continuous *samsāric* chain.. It explains the neuro-physical composition of the human being and its total functioning. Very often its inherent thrust for a life beyond the present is not even felt. Therī Vajirā's rather hard hitting remark to Mara about his ill conceived question - *diṭṭhigatam* - about the creation of the human being - *kenāyaṃ pakato satto* - clarifies this. She says *suddha-saṅkhāra-puñjo 'yaṃ nayidha sattūpalabhati*.
5. It is our firm conviction that the **Paṭiccasamuppāda** or the theory of Causal Genesis endeavours to explain the evolution and continuance of human life through the long range of Saṃsāra or cyclical reproduction. Without this multi-dimensional vision, the **Paṭiccasamuppāda** would reduce itself to be

meaningless and redundant.



## Buddhist Forum / 2002 Nos. 1 - 2 [February]

### Recording on 14.2.2002

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

#### Some Areas and Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy.

1. We believe we are correct in assuming that all religions pursue their religious aspirations, looking forward to a state very much higher and nobler than what exists currently in the world in which we live now. One might even call it other worldly. In most religions, or almost in all of them, it is a state beyond death. It is on disembodiment from the present, in a state referred to in Indian religions as *videhamukti*. Buddhists, i.e. certainly the early Theravada Buddhists, speak of the attainment of their goal of Nirvana here and now - *ditthe ' va dhamme*. We call it transcendental, i.e. above the worldly state of affairs. **The Buddha did attain it at the age of thirty-five, living here and now, and lived as such until he experienced his death or his life termination at eighty years of age.**

Basically, the Buddhists do not look upon humanity as a product of Divine creation. Therein, they differ from both the Indian theory of creation by an Ishvara, i.e. an *Issara-nimmāṇavāda* or the Judeo-Christian tradition of creation by God. Buddhism speaks unmistakably of the world as being *anabhissaro* or being without a Supreme Presiding Divinity. We humans are a product of evolution of life in the universe. We have grown up in our own midst, reacting to one another. Often our behaviour has been questionable.

On a basic theory of progress and development, human behaviour has to be corrected and modified. As we advance in the course of human civilization, we also develop a vast range of niceties, within the framework of propriety and decorum. This leads to the evolution of a social philosophy of man, in the interests of carefully thought out actions and reactions.

\* \* A few observations from you on this peripheral area before we go over to specific studies.

2. Buddhist social philosophy looks upon **the family as the smallest reducible unit of the human community**. That is where, under normal circumstances, the seed of human life germinates and the growth of the human community begins. We consider **unmarried mothers** and **fatherless homes** as stray fragments which have hardly any relationship to the organic human corpus. It appears as though their genetic unity has never seen the light of day or that it has withered away in the desert heat of the ultra-modern society.

A husband and a wife undoubtedly acquire more meaning in the human community as mother and father, **as loving partners parenting children**. It is our candid opinion that the sooner we reject and discard the concept of the single parent family, a happier place would the world be. This, we believe, has been deliberated and agreed upon.

A family unit composed of **a good, loving and dutiful husband and wife** was therefore looked upon as **a premier institute** within **the human community**. Considerable attention seems to have been paid to this area in several places in Buddhist literature. The Great Buddhist Lady Visākhā [AN. IV. 267] and a gentleman of considerable social standing called Uggaha Meṇḍakanattā, the grandson of the banker Meṇḍaka [AN.III.37] received from the Buddha instructions with regard to what makes a good wife of a newly married girl. Uggaha, in fact, did really invite the Buddha and some monks to his home and after entertaining him to a meal, requested him **to give counsel**

**to his daughters who were about to get married.** Parents of the good old days in Buddha's time gave serious thought to getting their children groomed for marriage through religious instruction. They thought it was their bounden duty.

Today, even the Western world has begun to speak of **Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft.** The ancients in the East **looked up to their religions for the moulding of the character of their children.** The Buddha was fully aware of the role he had to play. And he did play it remarkably well.

Today the situation is lamentable. And equally alarming. Leave alone **grooming children for marriage.** Obviously parents are neither worried about nor do they seem capable of **even rearing their teenage and pre-teenage sons and daughters.** The numerous nervous break-down cases that we come across today is more than enough proof of this.

In **these pre-marriage counsellings,** the Buddha's instructions are based on several reasonable assumptions. We are inclined to think they are reasonable. The woman being highly respected in early Indian culture **as the progenitor of life** [Manu saying that the woman was created for life production = *prajānārthaṃ striyah s'stāh*], she was looked up to **as being capable of piloting the total life-management process in the home,** of course together in the company of her equally responsible husband. We find, Buddhism in particular, vesting a great deal of responsibility in her. It is a great trust placed in her for her dependability. She is expected to and made to live up to it. It is only today that various instigations from the society around **make her rebel against it.**

\* Life in the home is set up primarily under her charge. She is trusted to be capable of taking complete command over it. In the household, she is literally the first to get up in the morning and the last to go to bed at night. She is completely blended with the wishes of her husband in whatever they do, and

she lives up to his expectations, more or less, in thought, word and deed. She takes full charge of the property and possessions of the household and holds herself responsible for their proper management.

\* \* She is also looked up to as a perfect promoter of inter personal relations within the family. This includes the relationships with the husband's mother and father, and the religious personnel associated with the family - *samaṇabrāhmaṇā*. Also the personal care of household staff, including all grades of servants, their health care etc.

\* \* \* In return for these loyal and loving services of a wife towards her husband, she is to be reciprocally treated well by her husband. Sigālovāda Sutta [DN.III. 190] specifies under five broad heads these duties of a husband towards his wife. 1. She is to be honoured, respected and recognized [*sammānanāya*]. 2. She should suffer no insults or contempt [*avimānanāya*]. 3. There should be absolute conjugal fidelity [*anaticariyāya*]. 4. Household wealth shall be in her charge [*iṣṣariya-vossaggena*]. 5. She should be given everything that contributes to the beauty of a woman [*alaṅkāraṇuppadānena*].

\* \* \* \* Saddled in delightfully loving partnership as husband and wife, the woman is now ready for the arrival of children and building up a family. Her vision, and we believe, her attitudes and temperament are now all in perfect maturity and well set for the task. These are the natural and normal two-parent families. The total coverage of the process of growth of a child by two parents is deemed absolutely essential. Single-parent families, too often, turn out to be lamentable failures with disastrous imbalances. The father and mother together should form the model to follow in the home. That is why the Buddhist texts refer to the parents as the presiding divinities in the home - *Brahmā ' ti mātā-pitāro*. They also are, and should be, the unfailing **first teachers** in the home - *pubbācariyā ' ti vuccare*. No aid of outside institutions is sought. The parents are believed to be and have to be an embodiment of

love towards their progeny: *pajāya cānukampakā* [AN. I. 132].

### 3. Child bearing and Child rearing - the Buddhist way.

In addition to the more or less **pre-marriage instructions** regarding **happy homes** and **cordial family relationships** we have discussed so far, Buddhist teachings offer a special set of instructions with regard to **child care and growth of love** [See AN.II. 32]. In Pali, they are referred to as *cattāri saṅgaha-vatthūni* and in Sinhala as *satara sangraha vastu*. Believe me, in their origin, they indeed are very relevant instructions for bringing up gentle, dutiful and loving children with nobility of character. We do have a great need of such ones. They are not that easy to find today. It is said that in the neglect of these areas of child care in bringing up children, **no parents would ever receive any love or respect from their children -**

*Ete ca saṅgahā nāssu na mātā putta-kāraṇā*

*Labetha mānaṃ pūjaṃ vā na pitā putta-kāraṇā*. Ibid.

\* In our opinion, the **parent-children respectful and loving relationship** is the main and major theme here.

But we also find these instructions transferred to yet another area [See AN. IV. 219 f.]. There it pertains to the management of large assemblies of people [*mahaṭi parisā*] by community leaders etc. The Buddha is made elevate to eminence **Hatthaka Ālavaka** for the possession of these virtues as a group leader of men.

We insist that you learn to assess these severally in their different contexts, but not forgetting their priorities. The latter, the theme of group nursing or public relations, we believe, is only an extended application of the former.

The **theme of child rearing, promoting the love and respect of children** towards **their parents**, is the major concern of the *satara sangraha vastu*. It is



absolutely **a dual relationship** form of conduct. Its reciprocity cannot be over emphasized. The set consists of

1. Provision of basic physical needs like food and clothing - *d naṃ*
2. Loving care [= loving words] - *peyya-vajja*
3. Counselling [= welfare guidance] - *attha-cariyā*
4. Emotional mobility [of parents in children's joys and griefs] *samānattatā*

These include a **well understood scheme of child-care**, reinforcing an admirable inner strength within the family, **founded on love, understanding and admiration among the total membership of the family**. In these circumstances, there never ever can be anything of the sort called **teenage stress**, harassing the poor teenagers or their equally helplessly lamenting parents.



## Buddhist Forum / 2002 Nos. 3 - 4 [February]

### Recording on 21.2.2002

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

Some Areas and Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy.

**Utilization of Human Resources.** In the Buddhist way, man on earth has to rely entirely on himself to organize his own social set up. It is not done through prayer. A king, here on earth, rules his kingdom. He has to hold himself responsible for what happens therein, in peace or in war, in prosperity or adversity. Elsewhere, like in the republics, it may be collective responsibility. In the private sector, it may take a different form of centralized administration. But in all cases, **it is human ingenuity, integrity and philanthropy that matters.**

In any case, **human resources have to be utilized sensibly**, and **with vision**, to **gain maximum benefit** out of it **for mankind**. In the Kūṭadanta Sutta [DN. I.135 f.], the Chaplain to King Mahā Vijita gives specific instructions to the king on this subject, assuring that this is the best way to **establish social stability** and **consequent peace and prosperity in the land**. It is not by sacrifices and prayers.

**A.** People of the land have to be **employed in terms of their skills and aptitudes** - there being no square pegs in round holes. Avenues of employment are classified briefly under -1. agriculture and animal husbandry [*kasi-gorakkhe*], 2. trade [*vāṇijjāya*], 3. government service [*rāja-porise*].

**B.** Necessary **incentives and inducements** along with these are also recommended like *a.* seed and planting material as well as food [*bīja-bhattam*] to those engaged in agriculture, *b.* monetary assistance [*pābhatam*] to traders, and *c.* food and regular wages [*bhatta-vetanam*] to those in state service. It is illuminating at times to read the Commentarial notes on these. " When what is given is not enough, further supplies of everything like seed, food and agricultural implements should be given." [*dinne appahonte puna aññam ' pi bījañ ca bhattañ ca kasiparibhaṇḍañ ca sabbam detū ' ti attho*. DA. SHB. I. 209].

**C.** With this kind of regularized arrangement by those in authority, we are told, the people of the land are under no oppression or harassment [*akaṇṭakā anupapīṅā*], and are full of rejoicing [*mudā modamānā*]. They do not have the need even to lock the doors of their homes [*apāruta-gharā maññe*]. The stress here in utilizing man-power resources is that **there is satisfaction on all sides**, the employer and the employee, whether under the government machinery or private sector.

This is the kind of instruction which our government planners and policy makers should receive, **through the cultural heritage** of their **own religion in this country**. The **Buddhist clergy of the land**, who receive adequate state

patronage, **must deliver the goods**. A vast wealth of Buddhist teachings, right down from the Buddha himself, is there to guide them. Why should our political leadership, either in ignorance or through pressure and coercion from outside forces, economic, political or whatever it be, be forced to put the telescope on to the blind eye. This is where we believe, in politics and in economics, revisionist new thinking has to come in. In this country, it is never a day too early now.

- D.** In this area of handling manpower resources in the human community, the Sigāla Sutta to which we keep constantly referring, has some very valuable information. The employer as the more privileged group in the field has to take a more generous and more sympathetic view towards his employee. Here are the conditions laid down for him [DN. III. 191].
1. In assigning work, the employer must be conscious of and sensitive to the strength and physical conditions of his workers - *yathābalaṃ kammanta-saṃvidhānena*.
  2. Provision of regular daily meals and monthly wages - *bhatta-vetana-anuppadānena*.
  3. Medical supplies and health care - *gilāna-upatthānena*.
  4. Share with employees supplies of special foods and delicacies - *acchariyānaṃ rasānaṃ saṃvibhāgena*.
  5. Release employees from work at regular hours - *samaye vossagena*.
- E.** It is delightful to discover from historical records like the **Mahāvamsa** that kings of Sri Lanka like **Duṭṭhagāmaṇī [167-131 B.C.]** appear to have implemented these laws relating to management of labour, observing them to the very letter. **Cultural traditions of Buddhism were upheld by kings of Sri Lanka with great pride and very high esteem. The rulers of the land never turned their back on the culture of the of the people over whom they ruled. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī** in particular is said to have insisted on making payments to all

those who worked on the construction of the Mahāthūpa. His supply of food and other needs to the workmen has also won great praise and applause.

To guarantee a harmonious two-way flow in this area of employer and employee, the sutta also prescribes for the good behaviour of employees in and out of the work place. This is what is laid down there.

1. Regular attendance at work place, arriving in time - *pubbuṭṭhāyi*.
2. Working the full allotted time - *pacchā nipātinī*.
3. Honesty in appropriating anything from the employer - *dinna- ādāyī* = taking only what is given.
4. Doing the assigned work with perfect efficiency - *sukata-kamma-kārakā*.
5. Always speaks in praise of the employer - *kitti-vaṇṇa-harā*.



## Buddhist Forum / 2002 Nos. 5 - 6 [February]

### Recording on 21.2.2002

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

Some Areas and Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy.

#### A. Reciprocity of human relationships.

1. Refreshing our memory of what we have said so far during our past discussions, one very distinct feature emerges, namely **that human relationships have to be necessarily reciprocal**. In spite of such dualities which exist as between the older and the younger, employer and employee, parents and children, the male and the female, **there has inevitably to be in the human society a two-way flow of feelings and**

**relationships for the smooth and successful continuance of benefits which both parties have to derive.**

2. We have already spoken about **the two chief partners in the family**, i.e. **the husband and the wife**. The Buddha is very specific about what to do and what not to do by both partners. It is amazing how the Buddha has meticulously gone into these diverse areas of relationships. A **husband should very sensitively avoid insulting and derogatory remarks towards his wife** [*avimānanāya*]. He **should show her due respect and recognition** [*sammānanāya*].

A wife, on her part, has to reciprocate to her husband her due share of responsibilities, primarily by way of conjugal fidelity [*anaticārinī*], efficient performance of household duties [*susamvihita-kammantā*], and taking good care of the entire household -- of persons including servants [*susamgahita-parijjanā*] and of the acquired property of her husband including his earnings [*sambhataṃ anurakkhati*].

3. On the handling of man power resources of a country for unquestionable development of the people and the land, we have already indicated as to what should be meaningful utilization of the human resource. As to how labour should be used, maximizing productivity and outcome, without any undue strain. Buddhist instructions with regard to management of labour cannot in any way be superseded or improved upon by the ILO. Buddhist labour laws are *par excellence*. A closer examination would show that they would be most updated and justifiable in any international court of law in any century or any millennium to come.
4. Now a word about the healthy attitude of the employee towards his employer. To guarantee **a harmonious two-way flow** in this area of **employer and employee**, the sutta also **prescribes for the good behaviour of employees in and out of the work place**. This is what is laid down there.

1. Regular attendance at work place, arriving in time - *pubbuṭṭhāyi*.
2. Working the full allotted time - *pacchā nipātinī*. Both these ensure maximum utilization of labour for the payments made by the employer.
3. Honesty in appropriating anything from the employer - *dinna- ādāyī*= taking only what is given.
4. Doing the assigned work with perfect efficiency - *sukata-kamma-kārakā*. This ensures quality production, whether in industry or in agriculture.
5. Always speaks in praise of the employer - *kitti-vaṇṇa-harā*.

In Sri Lanka, the **rulers of the land never turned their back on the culture of the people** over whom **they ruled**. **Duṭṭhagāmaṇī** in particular, who had imbibed fully well the culture of Buddhism, is said to have adhered to this. He **insisted on making payments to all those who worked** on the construction project of the Mahāthūpa [*Amūlaṃ ettha kammaṃ ca na kātabban ' ti ṇāpayi*. Mhv. Ch. 30. v. 17]. **His supply in abundance of food and other needs to the workmen** on that occasion has won great praise and applause from historians of later times. This is how our Mahāvamsa records it.

*Ekekasmim̐ duvārasmim̐ ṭhapāpesi kahāpaṇe  
soĀsasatasahassāni vatthāni subahūni ca  
Vividhañ ca alaṅkāraṃ khajjabhojjaṃ sapānakaṃ  
gandha-māla-guĀādī ca mukhavāsaka-pañcakaṃ  
Yathārucitaṃ gaṇhantu kammaṃ katvā yathārucciṃ  
Te tath ' eva apekkhitvā adamsu rājakammikā.* Mhv. Ch. 30. vv.18-20

## **B. Overall success for the human community - men, women and children.**

1. Buddhism seems to indicate a serious concern for **success in the human community for which the humans alone are going to be held responsible**.

The story of the so-called **Mangala Sutta** is the best example we can cite. This is depicted as a worldwide universal concern - of both gods and men. This is how prayers and supplications are totally dispensed with.

2. Two areas are clearly reckoned with - **a.** the social and the **b.** the religious or spiritual.

**a.** The social discusses a wide range of upgraded relationships between different groups like children towards parents [*mātā-pitu-upatthānaṃ*], of husband towards wives and children [*putta-dārassa-saṅgaho*]. It also reckons with extra-familia relationships like one's attitude to one's relative [*ñātakānañ ca saṅgaho*].

In addition to these personal relationships, the Sutta also lays a great deal of stress on social accomplishments of persons in society, of men, women and children. The need for a high level of learning [*bāhusaccañ ca*], not merely in the universities in the midst of professors, is regarded as contributing invariably to social success. It is also to be accompanied with acquisition of diverse skills [*sippañ ca*] which humans need in their domestic day to day life.

Qualitative human virtues like respectfulness [*gāraṇo*], unruffled gentleness [*nivāto*], contentment [*santuṭṭhi*] and gratitude [*kataññutā*] are not to be forgotten.



**Buddhist Forum / 2002 Nos. 7 - 8 [February]**

**Recording on 22.2.2002**

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

## Some Areas and Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy.

### A. Causes of Social Decline and Deterioration - Parābhava and Vasala Suttas.

1. During this season, during several sessions of the Buddhist Forum, we have been trying to stress how **conscientiously** Buddhist teachings **take up a wide range of social issues, carefully analyse them, and try to work out satisfactory solutions to the problems** which the **sanity or insanity of society generates**.
2. These are indelibly recorded in our Buddhist texts of all grades, both very ancient and even others less ancient. Let us very seriously remind our listeners that some of the more modern writers on Buddhism, more Sri Lankans than others, **have not read as much of Buddhism as they should have read**. Some of them **even do not have the necessary academic discipline to undertake such so-called critical analytical studies**.
3. They come from all manner of pastures such as history, sociology and psychology. Now there are even newer brands like liberation anthropologists. New names, we know, find better and more extensive markets. Does one ever believe **that Buddhism has no interest or concern about the virginity or chastity of woman because Buddhism as a religious institution does not get Buddhist monks to officiate at the marriages of men and women?** But this is what accepted sociologists, and mind you of Sri Lankan origin at that, write about Buddhism, while they are employed abroad.
4. The unavoidable question at this stage "is accepted by whom?" The invariable answer should be **by interested groups of people who know less than nothing about Buddhism**. But we boldly say now the time has come to nail these lies to the counter. We also like to make it known to Sri Lankan listeners that **newer and younger scholars of Buddhism are now**



**emerging in English speaking countries who see a far greater richness in Buddhism than we do in this part of the world.**

5. We also need to strike a serious note of warning about a **wide range of cheap and notorious preachers of Buddhism**, emerging from among the Buddhist ranks, both and monk and laymen who are now out in the streets and in well attended halls, **delivering highly questionable doctrines**. One needs to accost them and question them about their sources. We have no room in Buddhism for revelations of such prophets. Dhamma and Vinaya alone have to be the final authority. Think of the Buddha's own advise under the Four Mahāpadesā, delivered before his final passing away.



## **Buddhist Forum / 2003 Nos. 1 - 2 [January] Recording on 6.1.2003**

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari - Telephone 689388

Members: Dr. Lorna Devaraja Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

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**Buddhism as a Way of Living / Living for a Purpose.**

Greetings to our listeners. We are glad to back with you once again on the Buddhist Forum. I have with me on this panel today Dr. Lorna Devaraja, Mr. Olcot Gunasekera and Professor Henry weerasinghe.

It is with a very deep sense of sorrow that we take note today of the passing away of Mr. Alec Robertson who, for more than fifty years, had been associated with us as a regular contributor to this Buddhist Forum programme at whic we are now sitting. He was a devout Buddhist. His services to the cause of

Buddhism will remain inestimable for all times. He was a great man of his own stature and I personally know it was always a pleasure to agree with Mr. Robertson, even to disagree. We wish him peace and comfort, wherever he be and speedy journeying to his goal of Nirvana.

Madam, and you gentlemen of the panel. I know you might find it difficult to agree with me if I said that I see Buddhism in Sri Lanka or Sri Lankan Buddhism today like a village cart, very much over loaded with coconuts, and making it worse with a much larger amount of household goods stacked above it. I feel there is an imminent danger of the cart completely breaking down or toppling over. How and the why of it, and also what we should do about it is for us to examine.

Therefore in our Buddhist Forum Series which we are starting today, I am not giving to deliver to you each day trays full of information on Buddhism, from its subtle and minute philosophical analyses which came about in its elaboration process in the course of centuries to its newer third millennium techniques of sudden and abbreviated enlightenment.

Our honest endeavour would be to examine, with an acceptable degree of honesty, these accretions which after all may not be all that necessary **from the Buddhist salvation point of view**. That is from the genuine and unalterable aspiration **to get beyond samsāra** and enjoy the **unquestionable bliss of not being born again** as the Buddha himself said about his own achievement. This is how he expressed it: *Ayaṃ antimā jāti natthi 'dāni punabbhavo*. This is my last birth. I shall not be born again. Mark these words, I say.

Now over to you for your observations.

1. Let us begin by asking Religiousness or spirituality in the human mind, how, when and where does it begin?

The world is nearly agreed today that religion, if correctly and properly used, is an essential ingredient for the smooth running of the human machine. I am

afraid I have to stress the words **correctly and properly used**. Ever since the recorded history of man, we see endless instances of its abuse. This does not, by any means, justify the total rejection of religion.

## 2. Is the genesis of religions from the unknown to the known or *vice versa*?

It is Buddhism, and perhaps Buddhism alone, which commences as a religion from the known world of humans, in its analysis of life and its ramifications, and in its attempt to offer a solution to its problems. This will be our main area of study in these discussions.

Now to begin with

## 3. Let us take a quick look at the very early religious origins of humans, at least in India.

We discover, even today, helplessness of man everywhere in the world he lives in. There is a visible dominance of the physical world over man. Today, science and technology, equally well dominates over man.

It is known that ancient man dreaded very much the phenomenon of thunder and lightning. Vedic Aryans of India deified this and used it as a medium of moral guardianship. With peals of thunder, they said, the God Parjanya destroys the evil-doers: *Parjanya sthanayan hanti duṣk`taḥ*. In Sinhala we say that Thunder should knock down the evil doer: *Hena gahaṇṭa ona*.

Even when it came to the very natural personal processes of diseases and death in one' s life, these Vedic Indians almost placed the whole of it in the hands of gods they had themselves created. We discover that Vedic Aryans also deaded a disease called dropsy associated with the accumulation of water in the body cells. This they connected with God Varuna whom they called the Lord of Waters or Apāṃ Patih and prayed to him that they be not rolled into their graves,

with bellies filled with water.

Note that these early Indians however had **a moral awareness in their day to day living**. It is true that to maintain it, they sought assistance from a world outside themselves. Father being the person in authority in the home, symbol of love and source of protection, they very naturally, and with ease and grace, looked out for an equally kind or much kinder father elsewhere. Thus came about the idea of **Father in Heaven**. This happened both in India and elsewhere. Even Brahmā in India is called the Great Father or *pitā maha*.

### Origin of religious thinking in India

The creation of a thelogy based on natural phenomena and gradual philosophy around it seems to mark the beginning of Indian religious thinking. The Indians are relentlessly gripped by it. The Buddha, with his empiricist approach to life, is often seen challenging it.

#### 4. A startling change of direction

On the other hand, the Buddha's religious teachings commence with what is clearly and visibly known to man, here at down-to-earth level. To him, the ills of the world are primarily what happens to man. **From birth to death, man is a victim of a process of change**. So he picks up man for his analysis, and starts with his most disturbing problem of decay and death - *jarā-mraṇaṃ*. In the Mahānidāna Sutta the Buddha tells Ananda that if one were asked whether there is **a cause** [*idappaccayatā*] for **decay and death**, the reply should be **Yes**. It is directed that one should point out **birth as its cause** *jāti-paccayā jarā-maranan ' ti*]. What a delightful realistic way of facing and analysing human problems.

Here we would do well to take a closer look at the Buddhist analysis of the concept of *dukkha*.

Let me ask you Do we adequately know about the scientific concept of **the law of change**. Even the atoms, we are told, keep constantly changing. That is

what made it possible for the great philosopher Bertrand Russell to say somewhere that **even if you hit your head against a stone wall, you really strike nothing**. Even stones are, within themselves in a process of constant change, though not visibly.

This is what the Buddha said more than twenty-five centuries ago that all conditioned things in the world are in a state of constant change - *sabbe sankhārā aniccā*. Not to know this is really to run into a lot of trouble continually in our day to day life. We are not accustomed to accept change as a reality. We grieve when we do not know what is happening around us. To be forewarned is to be fprearmed, they say. Inability to cope with this law of change, any time, anywhere, everywhere results in *dukkha*. That is why *dukkha* always comes as a corollary of *anicca*. Here we are specifically dealing with change as a feature in the physical world. Material change in our own selves like decay and disease brought about through age, time being an important factor therein. Our eye-sight fails, our hearing fails. Equally well our memory fails.

There is also change in the area of the mind. Our emotional variations and fluctuations bring about devastating psychic repercussions. Even with a very slight acquaintance with what the Buddha taught in his definition of the *dukkha-sacca* or **truth about unsatisfactoriness**, one would be impressed with the profundity and depth of insight in these analyses.

Because of an unbeatable sense of ego, i.e. a **sense of I** and **mine** in every one of us, we like to perpetuate our self identity. **I** as different and distinct from **the other**, with its associated **likes** and **dislikes**. Without our knowing it, this idea of self identity crystalizes and the whole world around us gets tagged on to it. That is how the **idea of mine** begins to emerge. It looks a basic human idea, or we would rather say a human weakness, for each one of us to stretch out and exist eternally and infinitely through time and space. Therefore we **rebelliously challenge the idea of change**. We wish for a static and unchanging world to stay

the way we want it, imaginng all the time that it supplies an unending source of delight. But we can assure you, referee or no referee, you and I will always be declared the loser. What you grieve over here is that your wishes are never ever respected. The world around us changes contrary to our wishes.



## Buddhist Forum / 2003 Nos. 3 - 4 [January] Recording on 20.1.2003

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari - Telephone 689388

Members: Dr. Lorna Devaraja Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

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We take up today, for a more complete discussion, a question which came up during our last forum. I think we do need to deliberate on it a great deal more.

The Q. is can people of other different faiths practice the Noble Eightfold Path. They certainly can, It is a way of life and therefore can be practiced by any one. But if practiced correctly, with complete awareness as to what one does in doing so, it has invariably to end up in is final achievement of the Nibbanic goal.

### A. Dukkha as the Reality or the Real Nature of our LIFE IN THE WORLD.

The Bodhisatta, in his pre-enlightenment observations about the world, remarked about the all pervading unsatisfactoriness of the normal life pattern of the humans in the world, of their being caught up in the ceaseless process of birth and death [*jāti* and *maraṇa*], invariably associated with the accompanying processes of decay and disease [*jarā* and *vyādhī*]. He referred to this in his remarks as *Kicchaṃ vata ayam loko āpanno* = **This world is plunged in serious**

**trouble.**

This does not mean that such **trouble exists in the world, by itself**. The fact is that the world has its own intrinsic pattern, both physically and in the pattern of psychological behaviour of humans. On the other hand, we in our ignorance of the nature of the world, do not comfortably fall in line with this reality. We **are at variance with it**, therefore constantly in conflict with it.

The Buddha, in telling us of **his total grasp of this reality** of *dukkha*, takes us through two clearly identifiable stages. He wants us to make no mistake about this. Even prior to his enlightenment, he claims that he had some awareness that all was not well with the humans in the world - *kicchaṃ vatā' yaṃ loko āpanno*. He emphasises the earliness of his awareness by saying *pubbe' va me abhisambodhā*. This means 'prior to my enlightenment'.

He uses two more phrases, *anabhisambuddhassa* as well as *bodhisattass' eva sato* which mean 'not yet become a Buddha' and 'while I was still a Bodhisatta'. This pre-enlightenment vision, we maintain, should be the prerogative of any human with a sensibly developed vision of life. It is the search for a way out of this mass of suffering or *dukkhakkhandha* which made Gotama the Fully Enlightened One. Thus we see that the sensitising of worldlings in this direction is undoubtedly a step towards the goal of Nibbana.

Elsewhere, after becoming the Fully Enlightened One, he repeatedly tells us that he consistently postulates two things, then and now, *pubbe* and *etarahi*, namely *dukkha* and the cessation of *dukkha* - *dukkhañ cā' haṃ paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ*. This is a very fine example of Buddhism's confrontation with the real challenges of life.

## B. Samsara and its termination in Nibbana

All these references clearly indicate that the Buddhist goal of Nibbana leaves

no room for entertaining any thoughts of **blissful existence or continuance within Samsara**. Life beyond death or what is generally known as *paralova* primarily requires a guarantee that humans at the end of their present life do not degrade themselves to descend to a state of existence lower than human. It is this degradation or descent which is implied in the words like *niraya*, *apāya*, *vinipāta* and *duggati*.

In the language of the Buddhists, this continuance in Samsara is known as *bhava* or *bhavagata*. If you inherit this, you literally inherit *dukkha*. Stretch your imagination enough to visualise the magnitude of *dukkha* you inherit as humans. Even at its minimum, we know it is unacceptably bad enough. Think of its seriousness if one had to descend below the level of humans. Best you get it first hand from persons, both men and women like Thera Gotama in the Theragāthā [Thag. vv. 258 -260] and Therī Sumedhā in the Therīgāthā [Thig. vv. 448 -522] who tell us of the absurdity of prolonging the journey in Samsara or *bhava*.

In this age of women's lib or Feminist Activists, it is well worth getting Therī Sumedhā's words direct from her. Note the depth of Sumedhā's conviction as a woman. Let Buddhist women as a whole, and particularly those of Sri Lanka who are not sensibly vociferous enough on vital religious and cultural issues take serious note of this.

See what she, as the daughter of a reigning monarch - *aggamahesiyā dhītā* - tells her parents:

"You both parents please listen to me. I am interested in Nibbana. Even happiness in Heaven which is part of the Samsaric process, i.e. *bhavagataṃ* is not permanent - *asassataṃ*. How much inferior and illusory are sensory gratifications of the world which bring disastrous consequences in their wake"? She is even much more pungent when she says " These deluded fools who are deeply involved in their gratification suffer long in depraved states."



Thera Gotama, in a very wise assesment which is not very different from this, listing the various Samsaric states, both bitter and sweet, through which he had been, speaks highly of the self-liberation bliss which had finally chosen and attained:

*Taṃ viditvā maham attasambhavaṃ santim eva satimā samajjhagaṃ.*

Thag. v. 260

### C. What then can we pack in between Samsāra and Nirvāna?

**Nothing at all.** From the area of early Buddhist texts there is very clear evidence that this passage from Samsara to Nirvana meant a complete transcendence over the Samsaric ills of birth and decay. In the Pārāyanavagga of the Suttanipāta [Sn. v. 1120] we are told of an extremely old Brahman named Pingiya who, announcing his decrepit old age which he beautifully describes as *Jiṇṇo 'ham asmi abalo vītavaṇṇo nettā na suddhā savaṇaṃ na phāsu* pleads for a way out of birth and death in this very existence - *jātijarāya idha vipphānaṃ*.



## Buddhist Forum / 2003 Nos. 5 - 6 [January] Recording on 27.1.2003

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari - Telephone 689388

Members: Dr. Lorna Devaraja Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

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### A. Basic introduction to the Buddhist way of life leading to Nibbana.

Our listeners would recollect that we have so far endeavoured to establish that if the Noble Eightfold Path is correctly understood in its totality and in its proper context, its worth lies in being the one and only way leading to the

Buddhist goal of Nibbana. The Middle Way which the Buddha says he comprehended [described by him as *majjhimā paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā*] is none other than this ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo.

The totality of Buddhist culture which leads the average worldling or *lokiya puthujjana* who, to begin with is not a Buddhist, up to his goal of Nibbana, consists not only of the Eightfold Path, but something more. Something additional to it, something beyond it. These, we have repeatedly told you, are the products or outcome of the magga. They are wisdom, referred to by such names as *paññā* or *ñāṇa* and *vimutti*. *Paññā*, remember, is item number 9 [nine]. This efficient instrument which is utilised to bring to light the truths or realities of life or *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa* or *yathābhucca* the achievement of which invariably yields the final result of release or *vimutti*. This is number 10 [ten] and is the grand finale of the Ariyan Buddhist way. It is none other than Nibbana. This at least is the way Buddhist teachings present it.

The totality of this way, from the raw uninitiated worldling to the achievement of Nibbana, is called the gradual or graduated way - *anupubba-sikkhā anupubbakiriya anupubba-paṭipadā*. It is divided into three **successive** stages of *sīla samādhi* and *paññā*. Please mark my words **successive stages** of the way. This means that one stage of achievement leads to the next and that to yet another. Every new move implies an ascent, an upward movement or achievement of spiritual progress.

B. This sort of scheme would leave no room for sudden leaps or bypassing of the gradual steps of the way which are primarily three in number.

1. We shall now take up for discussion the very first one of these, namely *sīla*. This is very basic in Buddhism. It is the grooming in good morality. To begin with, that is acceptably good behaviour of men, women and children towards one another. In other words, honourable inter personal relationships in society.

Talking of the inability of humans to guard or restrain themselves in terms of the *pañcasīla*, the Dhammapada verses 246-7 say that a person who cannot keep the five precepts digs his own root in this very life, that is literally digs his own grave - *idh 'eva eso lokasmim mūlaṃ khaṇati attano*. It is in this same sense of their down-to-earth value that the *pañcasīla* injunctions are called *pañca bhayāni* as well as *pañca verāni*.



## Buddhist Forum / 2002 Nos. 7 - 8 [February]

### Recording on 21.2.2002

Chair: Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari - Telephone 689388

Members: Dr. Rienzil Piyasena Mr. Olcott Gunasekera Prof. Henry Weerasinghe

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Subject: Some Areas and Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy.

#### A. Reciprocity of human relationships.

1. Refreshing our memory of what we have said so far during our past discussions, one very distinct feature emerges, namely **that human relationships have to be necessarily reciprocal**. In spite of such dualities which exist as between the older and the younger, employer and employee, parents and children, the male and the female, there has inevitably to be in the human society a two-way flow of feelings and relationships for the smooth and successful continuance of benefits which both parties have to derive.

2. We have already spoken about the two chief partners in the family, i.e. the husband and the wife. The Buddha is very specific about what to do and what not to do by both partners. It is amazing how the Buddha has meticulously gone into

these diverse areas of relationships. A husband should very sensitively avoid insulting and derogatory remarks towards his wife [*avimānanāya*]. He should show her due respect and recognition [*sammānanāya*].

A wife, on her part, has to reciprocate to her husband her due share of responsibilities, primarily by way of conjugal fidelity [*anaticārinī*], efficient performance of household duties [*susamvihita-kammantā*], and taking good care of the entire household -- of persons including servants [*susamgahita-parijjanā*] and of the acquired property of her husband including his earnings [*sambhatam anurakkhatī*].

3. On the handling of man power resources of a country for unquestionable development of the people and the land, we have already indicated as to what should be meaningful utilization of the human resource. As to how labour should be used, maximizing productivity and outcome without any undue strain. Buddhist instructions with regard to management of labour cannot in any way be suprceded by the ILO. Buddhist labour laws are *par excellence*.

